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MUSIC IN THEATRES.

IN no executive branch of the musical art has a more striking and general advancement been achieved in this metropolis within the past quarter of a century than in that portion of theatrical entertainments which consists of orchestral performances, such as may be heard every night in any London theatre, agreeably prefacing the play or plays on the bill of the evening, and, in one or two instances, making the *entr'actes*, or "waits," even more recreative to the audience than the stage business itself. A good band is now-a-days well nigh as essential an attraction to a metropolitan playhouse as a good acting company; and the former may be counted upon by the public with even more confidence than the latter, taking one theatre with another. Formerly, let us say from twenty-five to thirty years ago, this was far from being the case. Managers—more especially those of the minor theatres—provided "music" for their patrons, in compliance with a custom even then firmly established in London alone, of all European capitals; but the "music" in question, as a rule, was curiously trivial in character and feeble in execution, when not actually offensive to those among the audience who happened, for their sins, to be endowed with sensitive ears. Operetta, at the time I refer to, had not taken up the high standing in popular favour which it now enjoys, and the demands made upon theatrical orchestras in the matter of accompaniment to the voice were insignificant compared to those of the present day; but even in houses devoted to the performance of extravaganza, and styling themselves "the home of burlesque," the bands were as a rule at once weak and coarse, scrappy fiddling and obtrusive cornet-blowing being their leading characteristics. The orchestras at the two opera-houses were then the only theatrical bands that could justly claim to be excellent; that of the Princess's (then under the management of Charles Kean, who conscientiously endeavoured to make every item of his programme as good as possible of its kind) was a fairly efficient one, most intelligently led by Mr. J. L. Hatton, whose incidental music to the Kean revivals and novelties was for several successive years a conspicuous feature of those admirable entertainments. But musicians who remember the wheezy and squeaky debility of the band at the Haymarket when one of the finest companies ever gathered together on London boards was playing Shakespeare at that theatre, or even later, under the Buckstone régime; the slovenly roughness of the accompani-

ments at the Strand, in the palmy days (as far as acting and dancing were concerned) of Marie Wilton and Elise Holt, Clarke and Rogers; the deeds of darkness, from a musical point of view, that were perpetrated with string, wood and brass at the Olympic, what time the inimitable Robson succeeded for a time in breaking the traditional ill-luck of that dingy little house, and at the Adelphi, during the reign of the King of melodrama, the late Benjamin Webster, whose like we shall not look upon again; those, I repeat, who can still recall to mind the musical accessories to theatrical performances of the period intervening between the Crimean War and the Napoleonic campaign in Lombardy will not hesitate to admit that the artistic progress effected in the training and utilisation of instrumental executants in the minor London theatres is little less than surprising.

As a matter of fact the theatrical bands of this metropolis can stand comparison, favourably to themselves, with those of any Continental city. I venture to make this assertion somewhat confidently, having, in the course of the past twenty years, attended every imaginable sort of theatrical performance in all the countries of Europe, except the Scandinavian kingdoms and the Hellenic realm. There be opera-houses on the other side of the silver streak, enjoying no inconsiderable reputation as musical institutions, and considered inimitable by their local frequenters, of which the orchestras are, in more than one respect, inferior to those of the "Comedy," the "Empire," or even the "Alhambra," before the last-named theatre reverted to its original condition as a music-hall. Of course bands engaged to play ballet music and the accompaniments of comic opera, operetta, &c., are expected to be of a quality superior to that of the average theatrical orchestra. But the latter, in London at least, has attained so high a standard as to leave little to be desired. The bands at the Lyceum, Haymarket, Princess's, Gaiety and Criterion discourse excellent music nightly; and the orchestral interludes at the Court, arranged with exquisite taste, and conducted with consummate skill by Carl Armbruster (of whom, three years ago, Hans Richter said to me, "I do not know throughout the length and breadth of Germany a better musician or cleverer conductor") constitute by no means the least attraction of that admirably managed house. Even at theatres of more modest pretensions in the orchestral line, such as the Vaudeville, Adelphi and Strand, the musical performances are every whit as good as those of the Paris Variétés or Berlin Wallner and Friedrich Wilhelm, although the bands of the latter theatres



claim to belong to the specifically operatic category. In short, it is at present as difficult to pick out a thoroughly bad theatrical orchestra in London as it was to discover a thoroughly good one five-and-twenty years ago.

This huge conglomeration of cities, the capital of the most powerful and extensive Empire the world has ever known, covering as much ground as a minor German Principality, and numbering more inhabitants than one or two full-blown kingdoms of my acquaintance, not only lacks a national opera-house, but does not even own a theatre specially affected to the performance of classical tragedy and comedy. Paris has her Théâtre Français, Berlin her Schauspielhaus, Vienna her Burgtheater, in all of which the works of the most eminent dramatists, living and dead, are played in a highly authoritative and complete manner by companies remarkable for their general efficiency rather than for superlative excellence in any of their individual members. London possesses no Thespian temple hallowed thus to the cult of the legitimate drama; even a combination of the Lyceum and Haymarket, as they have functioned for some years past under the Irving and Bancroft managements, would not yield a theatrical concretion equivalent to that afforded by any one of the above-named establishments, in which melodramas such as *The Bells* and *The Lyons Mail*, or nondescript absurdities of the *Lords and Commons* class could not, under existing circumstances, possibly obtain representation. But, whereas music is an integral and indispensable element of recreation, as that commodity is supplied to the London public by theatrical managers, the classical subventioned houses of continental capitals require no "concord of sweet sounds" to round off and relieve the entertainments they provide for their clients. It is held by many persons exercising recognised authority with respect to the "fitness of things" in Germany, as well as in France, that the interruption of a dramatic unity by musical interludes, for the most part irrelevant to the story or fundamental thought (*Grundidee*) of the piece, or whose relevancy thereto, at the best, is disputable and therefore distracting, is a barbarism not to be tolerated by properly trained and justly balanced intelligences; that such interruption breaks the thread of artistic continuity which should run without a hitch or tangle throughout the performance, and is calculated to jerk the spectator's train of thought off the rails; finally, that music in connection with the drama, unless interwoven with the dialogue and made essential to the action by the express intention and will of the author, is an anachronism and incongruity unworthy alike of an æsthetic management and a thoughtful, conscientious public. There is another reason, less high-sounding, but a good deal more to the point than any of the foregoing ones, why the Intendants of the "classical" theatres in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and other great Continental cities taboo music from their programmes. An orchestra is a costly item in a theatrical *menu*, involving an outlay that swallows up the income to

be derived from the sale of a goodly number of stalls and dress-circle seats; whereas the three knocks with which the prompter or call-boy announces the proximate "pull up" of the curtain to the audience entail no extra expense whatsoever upon the *impresario*. I apprehend that sagacious thrift has prompted the guiding spirits of the dramatic institutions in question to indoctrinate the public in the theory that, just as good wine needs no bush, so good theatrical performances need not the adventitious aid of music to enhance their attractiveness. Use is second nature; and I doubt not that the habitués of the Français, the Hofburg and the Schauspielhaus (who differ in many essential respects from the all-round theatre-goers of the French, Austrian and German capitals) would be painfully shocked were so frivolous an innovation as an orchestra adopted by the dramatic establishments in which they are accustomed to pass their evenings with the proud consciousness that they are combining instruction with recreation.

Although our fellow-Europeans on the other side of the Channel, no matter to what variety of the Caucasian race they may happen to belong, persistently refuse to admit that we are a musical people, it is very certain that any London manager who should venture to eliminate incidental music from his entertainments would have good reason to regret so ill-judged an experiment. Whether they pay any attention to the feats of the orchestra or not, English audiences expect to be supplied with some sort of instrumental performance between the acts, and would assuredly resent its omission as an unjustifiable slight. The patrons of melodrama, cispointine as well as transpointine, still cling fondly to the tradition that crime requires to be accompanied on the strings, *tremolando* and *alla sordina*, and that fiddles cannot do less than shiver sympathetically when the gas is turned down in preparation for a deed of blood or a spectral manifestation. We are a sentimental and sensation-loving people, and delight in any ocular or oral effect that helps to pile up the agony of a powerful "situation." Defering to the exigencies of this national characteristic, actors of high intellectual culture and keen artistic perception like Henry Irving and Wilson Barrett do not deem it inconsistent with the dignity of dramatic art to emphasize sensational episodes—even in Shakespearian plays—by "mysterious music" compounded according to the most approved recipes for that class of orchestral stimulant. To my mind this is a custom more honoured in the breach than in observance: but managers should know their own business best, and if men who have served the true interests of the drama, as well as their own, so strenuously and loyally as the lessees of the Lyceum and Princess's theatres deem it necessary, or even expedient, to comply with old-established usage in relation to such anachronistic but trivial details as tremulous chords and subdued stage illumination of any particular hue, doubtless they have good solid reasons for practising these and other cognate tricks of the *ad captandum* kind. The public at large owes them a

debt of gratitude for treating its transmitted prejudices with such kindly consideration; and a far larger meed of thankfulness for the increased excellence of the musical fare which they and other enterprising London managers have provided for it "since this old hat was new."

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

THE WORST OPERA EVER WRITTEN.

THE opinion as to which is the best opera ever written depends upon the peculiar tastes of those who express it. Their views are influenced in a great measure by surrounding circumstances, opportunities, and means to hand. The best opera may, therefore, be said to be that, which under conditions favourable to its production, has proved itself capable of pleasing best. The works which keep the stage not infrequently owe their popularity to conditions other than those which can be measured by the rules of art. Among these may be mentioned the convenience, the necessities, the obstinacy, or the faith of the manager, the caprices of favourite singers, the desire to conciliate "the powers that be;" the same "powers" having predilections towards certain forms of expression which are to be found in the works of certain writers, or a variety of other causes. It is said that "habit makes men untrue to themselves." This will account for the continuance of ugly fashions which all men deprecate, and all men follow. They will grow accustomed to that which at first they may have heartily condemned, and, in time, believing that they have misjudged at the outset, will end by liking.

There are numbers of works in all classes of literature, as well as in art and science, which are accepted as models of their kind, not because they are so, but because it is convenient to consider them as such. So, in due course, the names of certain people in various walks of life are regarded with reverence as authorities, until the smallest examination into their claims shows their falseness and their incapacity for the position in which they have been placed. They may have had heads of gold, but their feet are of clay.

One of these gods of the past was Joseph Addison, the writer of some of the most beautiful prose in the English language, and the author of the worst opera ever written.

Whatever doubt there may be as to the name of the man who gave to the world the best opera, there can be no question about the worst.

This opera was called *Rosamond*, and it had music furnished by Thomas Clayton, and it was produced in London in the year 1707.

It may have been an "unfortuitous concatenation" that Addison's words were set by a man who was regarded in his own day as an imposter, but it would require more than ordinary skill, not to say genius, to impart an interest to the words which Addison furnished "for the entertainment of the town." We are told that "the town" had been advertised for a long period before concerning the

work, and "for some considerable time conceived a longing expectation" concerning it, "as well from the character of Mr. Addison as the supposed abilities of the musical composer."

The "musical composer," Thomas Clayton, was a member of the royal band of music in the reign of King William and Queen Mary. He was "of no account in his profession." He was evidently a man who knew how to assert himself. He had travelled in Italy with a view to improvement—a point in his favour—and had brought back with him a number of compositions which he stated were his own. They were really the writings of musicians then unknown to the world. These he "mangled and sophisticated," and adapted them to the words of an English drama by Peter Motteux, the translator of "Don Quixote," of "Rabelais," and other works more remarkable for coarseness than refinement, a man whom Dryden addressed thus:—

"But whence art thou inspired, and thou alone
To flourish in an idiom, not thine own."

This joint concoction was called *Arsinoe*, and, as singularly enough, it met with some success, Clayton also "flourished in an idiom, not his own," and on the strength of the success achieved, he actually deceived the "wits of the age" into believing that he was the man destined to reform "the rusticity of the English music, and that, due encouragement being given, it would in a short time emulate that of the Italians themselves."

Among those who were so willingly deceived was Addison. He stated that *Arsinoe* was the first opera that gave us the taste of the Italian music, and therefore we may conclude that he thought very highly of it. The musical judges of the period held different views concerning it, and all that remains of this "beautiful opera" which Addison thought the best ever written, stands as a confirmation of the opinions of the experts.

Inspired by the success of *Arsinoe*, Addison, like Silas Wegg, "dropped into poetry," and solemnly produced his *Rosamond*, which he, as solemnly, entrusted to the imposter Clayton to set to music. Sir John Hawkins in his "History of the Science and Practice of Music," says, "A criticism on this most wretched performance is more than it deserves, but to account for the bad reception it met with, it is necessary to mention that the music preponderating against the elegance and humour of the poetry, and the reputation of its author, bore it down the third night of representation. To begin with the overture; it is in three parts, and in the key of D with the greater third; the first movement pretends to a great deal of spirit, but is mere noise. The two violin parts are simple counterpoint, and move in thirds almost throughout, and the last movement, intended for an air, is the most insipid ever heard. As to the songs, they have neither air nor expression. An ingenious and sensible writer, who was present at the performance, says that it is a confused chaos of music, and that its only merit is its shortness."

Dr. Burney dismisses his notice of the opera by calling it contemptuously "trash." There are

three acts in *Rosamond*, and there are forty-two pieces in all, namely, fourteen in the first act, fifteen in the second, and thirteen in the third, thus making an average of fourteen pieces in each act. This is one of the most remarkable instances of the author's love for symmetry.

The key of the overture or its relative minor is used for twenty-two out of the numbers, so that variety of tonality is not aimed at. The harmonies are confined to tonic and dominant. Modulation there is little, if any, but as no one of the songs or duets occupy more than two pages of print, the ear is not taxed very much beyond the monotony of the first proposed key. The longest piece in the opera is the duet for "Warr and Peace" which is 52 bars long; the overture has 37 bars only. The "infinite melos" is of course nowhere attempted. This is not to be wondered at, for composers in the days of *Rosamond* had some merciful consideration for the sensibilities of their audiences. Besides, it was not invented in the early part of the eighteenth century.

If the "infinite melos" had then no existence, the "vain repetition" of words was a trick which, derived from the Italians, was often employed by musicians. It is therefore not surprising to find numerous examples in the work of one who was destined to "bring the rusticity of the English music to emulate that of the Italians themselves," even though the number of bars in each piece is so small. When the poet, as in the present instance, furnished only a couple of lines for a song or a duet, such as:—

"Who to forbidden joys would rove
That knows the sweets of vertuous love,"

it was almost compulsory for the musician to repeat words in order that such ideas as he desired to express might be "cked out" as the boy did his manners.

The above duet, sung by King Henry and Queen Ellenor after their reconciliation consequent upon the immolation of *Rosamond*, concludes the opera. There are no choruses, it was not the custom to employ them in operas in those days. Like the "infinite melos" they "did not come till after that." But there is an allegory of "war and peace" very thrilling. While yet on the subject of the composer's repetitions it may be mentioned that one song for "Queen Ellenor" begins by seven reiterations of the words "I feel." It is only necessary to try the effect in speech to realise the sublimity of the result in music.

Six or eight repetitions of the word "fly" produced also a most dramatic impression. When King Henry sings, "O the pleasing, pleasing, pleasing, pleasing, pleasing, anguish, pleasing anguish" with a long holding note on the upper G for five bars in triple measure on the first syllable of anguish, the bars accompanying this effort with E, C, and D, successively, in each bar, none can withhold admiration for the genius which inspired such an exquisite and original idea. The culminating point of this tender and touching scene is reached

when Henry and *Rosamond* sing in thirds, "O may the present bliss endure" four times to exactly the same rhythm each time, first in B minor, ending on the dominant, then in D major, then again in B minor as at first, then once more in B minor ending on the tonic.

As the words just quoted are all that Addison furnished for the duet, we may suppose that he had unlimited confidence in the skill of the musician to carry on a thought so sketchily indicated. The unlimited confidence may have been also entertained by the poet in his own labours, and his belief communicated to others. There must have been a great amount of faith in the merits of the words to have induced so grave and serious a writer as Hawkins to praise "the elegance and humour of the poetry." It is quite possible that he may have been dazzled by "the reputation of its author" to commend so feeble a performance, if he had ever read it. But he, like a good many others, may not have seen a copy of the work he commends. It is scarcely credible that the words could ever have been seriously regarded as elegant; humorous they certainly are, though, perhaps, not in the spirit intended by Sir John Hawkins.

Can any one have considered that the reputation of Addison could have been in any way enhanced by the production of such verses as the following:—

THE PAGE'S SONG.

"Behold, on yonder rising ground;
The Bower that wanders, in meanders,
Ever bending, never ending,
Shades in shades, glades in glades,
Running an eternal round."

The rhymes are faulty, the meaning hazy, the imagery obscure, and the sense doubtful. Equally "elegant" and appropriate is the other song of the Page, sung, probably, while he is yet in contemplation of the "glades and shades"—

"He comes, victorious Henry comes,
Flutes and trumpets, fifes and drums,
In dreadful consort joyn'd;
And from afar, a sound of warr,
And fills with horror ev'ry wind."

When Addison comes to the "Ercles vein," he is still more impressive. Hear what the Queen says—

"No, no, 'tis decreed,
The traitress shall bleed,
No fear shall alarm, no pity disarm,
In my rage shall be seen the revenge of a Queen."

The tender and touching elegancies are reserved for *Rosamond*. In her sadness at the absence of Henry she sings in B minor—

"Beneath some hoary mountain
I'll lay me down and weep,
Or near some warbling fountain
Bewail myself asleep."

When Henry appears we are treated to the "pleasing anguish," and the "present bliss," already alluded to; but when Ellenor "with dagger and with bowl" confronts her rival, and *Rosamond* tries to excite her "pitty" and fails, she drinks the poison, and plucks up courage to say to the Queen:—

"Think not thou Author of my woe,
That Rosamond will leave thee so;
At dead of night, a horrid sight,
I'll haunt thy dreams, with hideous screams,
And when the gloomy night withdraws,
My Henry shall revenge my cause."

Queen Ellenor does not seem at all daunted by this terrible threat, but she joyously sings several songs after this, and takes part in the moral duet which closes the Opera.

The passages quoted furnish the "elegance" commended by Hawkins, the humour is supplied by two other characters, Sir Trusty and Gridoline, his *inamorata*, whose name is made to rhyme with "mine."

They appear to be old lovers of "three-score," but the ardour of their passion for each is not unruffled.

Sir Trusty commends the beauty of this object of his attention with an earnestness which is probably more exact than his rhymes.

"O Gridoline consult thy glass,
Behold that sweet bewitching face,
Those blooming cheeks, that lovely hue
Charming creature, every feature,
Will convince you I am true."

The logic of his reasoning is not so clear, but then love is above reason, as expression is superior to rhyme. They quarrel, of course, and call each other by such elegant names as "Villainous Scold," "Raschal," "Traytour," and "Shrew." Under the weight of a burdensome disappointment, Sir Trusty sings:—

"The Bow'r turns round, my brain's abus'd
The labyrinth grows more confus'd
The thickets dance, I stretch, I yawne
Death has trip'd up my heels, I'm gone."

What more there is of this "elegance and humour" may be safely left to the imagination.

The opera does not offer any incitement to the admirer of Addison, who has never read his works, or even any inducement to emulate his example, nor does it justify Dr. Johnson's comprehensive, pompous eulogy when he says: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to Addison." It is a pity that Dr. Johnson was not born to write this before the production of *Rosamond*. The public, in their desire to follow the Doctor's injunctions, might have demanded a few morning performances of the opera. As it was, they were not taught to give their days, and they could not endure the representation for more than three nights. Since then, the "elegance and humour" of the poetry have existed solely in the imagination of those who accept the statements of musical historians without examination.

The failure of the attempt to reform the "rusticity" of the English music and make it emulate the Italian" is, without question, the source of Addison's satire against Italian opera, as represented by Handel's *Rinaldo*, which formed the subject of the fifth paper of the *Spectator* some four years later. He had not been happy in his design of improving the "sense-

less absurdities which abounded" in operas, by supplying a libretto which had all the peculiarities he condemned. There is nothing of "that sound sense, correct grammar and polished versification" which is claimed for his work by those who probably have not studied it. The gall and bitterness infused into his sneers at Italian opera were the result of disappointment, and the cruel blow to his self-conceit in believing he could reform "the rusticity of the English music" by his "rational opera-libretto." *Rinaldo*, for all the sarcasm of the fifth paper, made Handel's reputation, laid the foundation of the fortune of Walsh, the publisher, and was the precursor of a long line of operas written by "Mynheer Handel, the Orpheus of our age." Few of these operas it is true, have lived to be classed among the best ever written. Many of their pieces are, however, still known, and testify as strongly to the power of their author, as the existence of *Rosamond* does to the incapacity both of Clayton and Addison. They, in their turn, may enjoy the distinction of having produced the worst opera ever written, the whole merit of which cannot with truth be claimed for the musician alone.

W. A. BARRETT.

SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE LICENSING SYSTEM.

OUR licensing authorities ought to come to an understanding with themselves, with the Government, and above all with the public at large, as to whether plays are things to be encouraged or put down. Most Englishmen have made up their minds on the subject, and hold that dramatic performances are beneficial or injurious according as they themselves happen to be good or bad. The licensing authorities seem, however, to be under the impression that though plays of many different kinds—including some kinds which are distinctly objectionable—may be tolerated at theatres, no play of any kind ought to be permitted at music halls. In accordance with this delusive idea, several persons connected as managers or performers with the Canterbury Hall were not long ago summoned before a police magistrate, when an attempt was made to show that a stage play had been performed at a place of entertainment licensed only for singing and dancing. The case was, in some measure, made out against the music hall people, who were proved to be in the habit of representing certain scenes which dealt with the adventures of Robin Hood, and in which Robin Hood and Maid Marian, as impersonated by music hall performers, took part. The case was dismissed. As the law stands, a music hall proprietor may tempt the public by means of acrobatic performances and all descriptions of dances, as well as serious, comic and what are called serio-comic songs. These songs, too, may be varied between the verses with scraps of dialogue, and often performers go so far as to sing, in more or less dramatic fashion, pieces for two, three or more voices. There, however, they must draw the line. Their soliloquies, the dialogues, their improved songs for three or more personages

may be as silly and as inconsequent as the performers like to make them. But let these attempts at drama have the least consistency given to them, so that a hired informer may be able to recognise in them the elements of a stage play, and all who have taken part in the representation stand condemned.

The evidence in the case against the Canterbury Hall was very strange, and it was interesting, in an historical sense, to see that the unfortunate performers had been driven by legislation to the same kind of expedients to which the actors at some of the minor theatres of Paris used to resort in the last century, when the regulations with regard to licenses and patents rendered it illegal at one theatre to speak, at another to sing, at a third to declaim recitative and so on. To the Comédie Française was reserved the sole right of performing pieces of a classical repertory. The Grand Opéra, or Académie Royale de Musique, as it was at that time called, could alone represent works composed throughout in music. The Opéra Comique possessed a patent which empowered its manager to perform musical works which were partly sung, partly spoken—whence the designation "opera comique," applied to works half spoken, half sung, which are sometimes exceedingly serious. At the Comédie Française singing was allowed, or at least tolerated on condition of its being unaccompanied, for which reason the page's song in Beaumarchais's comedy of the *Marriage of Figaro* (in the situation where, in the opera, Cherubini's *Voi che sapete* occurs), sung to the air Marlbrourk, was not supported by the orchestra. At the Comédie Italienne the players were not allowed to sing a note, and there was another Italian theatre at which no one was allowed to speak. At this latter theatre the actors used from time to time to exhibit scrolls inscribed with the words they dared not utter. At the former the idea of singing might no doubt have been conveyed to at least a small portion of the audience by means of musical notes exhibited by the would-be vocalist, though this would have been a poor substitute for actual song. The Italian comedians contented themselves with protesting in various ways against the tyrannical regulation which forbade them to vocalise. Thus in one piece they are reported to have introduced a donkey, who in some eminently musical situation, was made to bray; upon which Arlecchino struck the thoughtless animal with his wand and said to him in a loud voice, "Don't you know that on these boards it is illegal to sing?"

This practical joke would be new in London, and with some modifications as would at once suggest themselves, might be reproduced with effect.

H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.

Mr. JOSEPH BENNETT has been staying up to the present in New York, Boston, and Washington, and left recently for Denver and Salt Lake City where he intended to spend Christmas afterwards going on to San Francisco, and returning to England in the course of February.

RODICA.

Imitated from the Roumanian of Vasilie Alecsandri.

SEE how Rodica upon her plump dazzling
Lily-white shoulder her water-jar carries
Trips through the field down the line of young reapers,
From her lips dangling a gay scarlet flower!
As she approaches the youths rush to meet her,
Shouting "Rodica! thou lily of girls,
All thy desires to thee shall be granted—
Bring'st us cool solace of harvest's hot thirst!
Soon thy betrothal with gladness shall fill thee;
Joyous thy life-path, with blossoms bestrewn—
Happy thy household—well-laden thy table,
And thy soft bosom a cradle for babes."
Then, having greedily emptied her pitcher,
Pelt her with wheat grains the mischievous lads;
Laughing and shaking the corn from her tresses
Pretty Rodica trips lightly away.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

THE ten Crystal Palace Concerts preceding the Christmas recess were to have terminated with the production, for the first time in England, of Berlioz's colossal *Te Deum*; but this important event having perforce to be postponed, the ultimate Saturday (December 20), was devoted to a performance of Gounod's *Redemption*, which had in turn, a month earlier, made way for *The Rose of Sharon*. Absolute novelties have not been numerous, and Mr. Manns is evidently saving his *bonnes bouches* until after he resumes on St. Valentine's Day; but on the other hand he has introduced two or three instrumentalists of higher calibre than usual. Mlle. Clotilde Kleeberg, of whom we have already spoken, has been obtaining increased favour at the Popular Concerts, besides adding to her reputation as an "all-round" pianist by a successful recital at Princes' Hall. The young pianist has had exceptional good fortune, although her talent renders it all deserved. It is but a very short time ago since she made her first appearance in Paris, when the correspondent of one of the London dailies sent over a glowing account of her capabilities. M. Fritz Blumer, though perhaps an artist of less individuality than his fair predecessor, proved himself an executant of the first order by his interpretation of Saint-Saëns's pianoforte concerto in G minor, which quite gained for him the suffrages of a Palace audience. This favourable *début* was followed up on Dec. 6 by that of Herr Robert Heckmann, a violinist, who would seem to possess all the qualities that constitute a genuine *virtuoso*. A full, pure tone, perfect *mécanisme*, and admirable style were displayed by this artist in Max Bruch's first concerto, and, despite some nervousness, his playing impressed his auditors in a high degree. Their verdict has since been emphatically endorsed in Glasgow and Edinburgh; so Herr Heckmann may be said to have made a promising start in our midst. The Concert of Dec. 13 was wholly conducted by Mr. Frederic H. Cowen, who brought forward, for the first time at the Crystal Palace, his *Welsh Symphony*, and secured a flattering reception for that clever and characteristic work, which improves unmistakably on further acquaintance. It was rather hard on Mr. Cowen, however, that the printer of the programme book should have decided to credit him with the authorship of the eulogistic analytical notes appropriated for the occasion. Naturally enough, the intelligent and, perhaps, musical composer, could not see why "F. H." should stand with-

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Cowen

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out the initial of Mr. Cowen's surname. Or did he intend "F. H. C." to mean "Franz Hueffer Cowen?"

We are having the usual seasonal number of oratorio performances in the Metropolis. The Royal Society of Musicians may be said to have set the ball rolling with its annual rendering of the *Messiah*, which, under the direction of Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, not only satisfied artistic requirements, but drew a large audience and substantially benefited the funds of an excellent institution. Noteworthy in at least one respect was the performance of *Elijah* by the Royal Albert Hall Choral Society on December 10. It was an evening of storm and rain—a sample of the weather which, as a rule, is fatal to concerts taking place in the gigantic, out-of-the-way building at Kensington Gore—and yet the hall was so crowded that in the cheaper parts money was turned away. Folks had made up their minds to hear Mendelssohn's oratorio (which has not been given so frequently of late in London), and did not fear to brave the elements for the sake of enjoying their old favourite again. There are few other attractions that would have wielded a spell so irresistible. The vocalists, by the way, included Madame Albani, Madame Patey, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Santley—a quartet that needs no comment; while Mr. Barnby's choir added fresh laurels to those already won in *Parsifal* and the *Damnation de Faust*. On December 19, the Sacred Harmonic Society gave the *Messiah*, with Madame Valleria, Madame Fasset, Mr. Maas, and Mr. Bridson as vocalists, and Mr. W. H. Cummings as conductor. For the 23rd, Mr. W. G. Cusins promised his "annual grand Christmas performance" of Handel's immortal masterpiece, at St. James's Hall, the solos being sung by Miss Gertrude Griswold, Madame Patey, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley. Finally, the Albert Hall Society have announced the oratorio of oratorios for New Year's Night, with the following vocalists:—Madame Valleria, Madame Patey, Mr. Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Watkin Mills. After such a feast, lovers of sacred music can scarcely say that opportunity has lacked for them to take their fill.

With the single exception of the *Parsifal* recital, the winter musical season of 1884-5 has so far been singularly devoid of interest. It opened with a flourish and a show of importance that were sustained for an exceedingly brief space, after which events dwindled down in number and character to the conventional run of common-place occurrences. In recent years *entrepreneurs* have not, as a rule, so thoroughly neglected their opportunities in the few weeks that separate the middle of November from the Christmas holidays; but it may be that they have not yet entirely recovered their courage after the disastrous financial blows of last season. Even Mr. Boosey has been content to give no more than three Ballad Concerts before the recess, and his are not entertainments that generally appeal in vain to the public. The caterers who look after the anniversaries of patron saints failed not to profit by the wet day of St. Andrew—to the delectation, assuredly, of thousands of Scotchmen; but, save in these isolated instances, there have been as few undertakings of a popular nature as of those that possess distinct artistic value. We shall not attempt to explain the immediate causes of the falling-off, it would scarcely repay the trouble. But the coming year supplies a tolerably bright outlook, and we trust it may bring with it a musical harvest rich enough to atone for the barrenness of the early winter season.

FRÄULEIN BAUER has many pleasant stories to tell of old Zelter, the friend and correspondent of Goethe, and one of the earliest appreciators of the youthful Mendelssohn, for some time his pupil. Fräulein Bauer danced frequently with the young composer when he was a student at the Berlin University, and found him "an exceedingly nice partner." She was at that time eighteen, while Felix was two years younger, and "the most charming, most amiable youth one can imagine. With his beautiful, pure face, the long hair of dark locks, the good, intelligent eyes, and the fresh sweet mouth he might have served as model for a picture of Benjamin, whilst Zelter would have made a capital patriarch Jacob."

A TOLERABLY complete biography of Henriette Sontag might be made up from the accounts given by Fräulein Bauer's, here and there, of her career. In marrying Count Rossi, Sardinian Ambassador at various Courts, she made no brilliant alliance except in a social sense. The first effect of the union was to make it impossible for her to appear any longer on the stage. But in spite of King Carlo Alberto's injunction on the subject she sang several times at St. Petersburg, either at Court concerts or in operatic performances specially ordered by the Emperor. To Mdme. Sontag's representation that the King, her husband's master, did not like her to sing, Nicholas replied, "Tell him that I desired you to do so." After the crash of 1848 and 1849, when the war contribution imposed by victorious Austria on unhappy Sardinia had rendered it impossible for the King to pay his Ambassadors, Count Rossi, who had no private means, retired from diplomacy, and his wife, now free to re-appear on the stage, accepted an engagement at Her Majesty's Theatre. The King had some years before suggested to Count Rossi that he should separate from his wife, as if by reason of conjugal differences; when nothing he said need hinder her from appearing again on the stage as Henriette Sontag. Later on, when enough money had been made Sontag, according to this noble suggestion, was to leave the stage and become once more the Countess Rossi. But Count Rossi and Henriette loved each other and their children too sincerely to think of adopting so unworthy an expedient. When in 1849 Sontag reappeared at Her Majesty's Theatre, she was assured by her old patron the Grand Duke George of Mecklenberg-Strelitz, and by Lord Westmoreland, who had arranged with Mr. Lumley the terms of her engagement, "that Mdle. Henriette Sontag would exist solely for the Italian opera, but that in the aristocratic English drawing-rooms Her Excellency the Countess Rossi would hold the place due to her."

A CRITICISM written by Goethe on Sontag's singing, and contained in a letter to Zelter, dated September 9, 1826, is very curious. "That Mdle. Sontag," he wrote, "has now also passed us, dispensing melody and music, makes at any rate an epoch. To be sure everyone says that one ought to hear her often, and hundreds would gladly sit again in the Königsstadt theatre to-day and all day, and I among them. For, properly speaking, one ought to conceive and comprehend her first as an individual, recognise her as an element of the time, assimilate oneself with her; accustom oneself to her, then she must needs remain a sweet, agreeable enjoyment. But heard thus, *extempore*, her talent has more confused than comforted me. The good that passes by without returning, leaves behind it an impression which may be compared to a vacuum—is felt like a want.

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All business letters should be addressed to the PUBLISHERS.

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THE LUTE.

LONDON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 1885.

On the whole, the anti-Christmas Concert season has been a busy one. On St. Andrew's Eve Concerts more or less emblematic of Scotia's prestige in the musical world were held at Covent Garden, St. James's Hall, and Prince's Hall, while another

commemoration was given on the following Monday at the Albert Hall. No doubt the canny carls from north o' the border wax enthusiastic over these displays; but to Southern ears they savour of monotony, though, like Mr. W. S. Gilbert's Angus McClan, one occasionally encounters something "distinctly resembling an air." Another "rush" of Concerts came on the 19th ult., when the Royal Academy Students gave an exhibition of their proficiency at St. James's Hall in the morning, and the room was occupied in the evening by the Sacred Harmonic Society for a performance of *Messiah*; while Madame Viard-Louis' second Beethoven Meeting took place in the earlier part of the day; and more Beethoven was heard in the evening, when the Chevalier L. Bach played the first three pianoforte concertos of the Bonn master "on end." Sir Boyle Roche's bird is not in it with the modern musical critic. So far, the only real hit of the Autumn Concert season was the production of *The Rose of Sharon* at the Crystal Palace, when as great an amount of enthusiasm was exhibited as in the palmiest days of the Handel Festivals. There were hundreds unable to gain admission to the Concert-room, but many of these placidly contented themselves with a camp-stool seat at the nearest coign of vantage, where they followed what few strains filtered through the barrier of glass and iron, with score in hand. Mr. Mackenzie must have felt prouder that day than he did even during the rose-pelting at Norwich.

MUSICIANS generally will experience deep regret at the premature death of Mrs. Meadows White—better known under her maiden name of Alice Mary Smith. Mrs. White was one of the few lady-composers who have thoroughly mastered their art, and both in her instrumental and vocal compositions she displayed complete technical ability, besides melodic fancy of a very high order. The setting of Collins' *Passions* for the last Hereford Festival showed what Mrs. White was capable of doing in a sustained composition for voices and instruments in combination; and her *Masque of Pandora* will also be remembered as an exceptionally clever production.

PROSPECTS are brighter than usual for the next meeting of the Three Choirs. It must be confessed that in regard to liberality of views, the clergy of this diocese have all along set a worthy example to their clerical brethren of Worcester and Gloucester; and it only now needs a little enterprise in securing the services of leading composers to write something special for the Festival to render the forthcoming celebration a red-letter work in the annals of the associated choirs. There ought to be plenty of money in Hereford, or round about it; and if some of the wealthy gentry and county families would but subscribe handsomely, they would be doing a real service, not only to a laudable charity, but to the West-country Festivals.

At the first of Madame Sophie Löwe's two Concerts, at the Prince's Hall, while Miss Agnes Zimmermann was gracefully rendering a *morceau* of Schubert's, the smell of fire became alarmingly apparent, and smoke was seen ascending from the upper part of the hall. Miss Zimmermann kept her place, and though for a time she suspended her performance, her admirable sang froid had so calming an effect upon the fears of the audience, that not a single individual left his place. The fire was put out—the warming stove was the delinquent apparatus—and the Concert proceeded. How easy

LUTE". N° 25.

This Anthem is published separately. PRICE 3^d

To his friend, F. MOUNTFORD, Esq.

SILVERDALE, STAFFORDSHIRE.

"REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS." Anthem.

PHIL. IV. 4. 5. 6. 7.

Music by

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Allegro con brio.

Organ. = 132.



Soprano. *f*

Re-joyce in the Lord al-way And a-gain I say re-joyce




Alto. *f*

Re-joyce in the Lord rejoice al-way And a-gain I say re-joyce



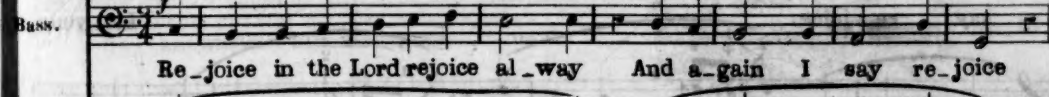
Tenor. *f*

Re-joyce in the Lord al-way And a-gain I say re-joyce re-



Bass. *f*

Re-joyce in the Lord rejoice al-way And a-gain I say re-joyce



Organ. *f a tempo*



Re-joyce in the Lord al - way And a - gain I

Re-joyce in the Lord rejoice al - way And a - gain I

-joyce in the Lord al - way And a - gain I

Re-joyce in the Lord rejoice al - way And a - gain I

This system contains four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in treble clef, and the piano is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'Re-joyce in the Lord al - way And a - gain I'. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand.

say re - joyce.

say re - joyce.

say re - joyce.

say re - joyce. Let your

This system continues the vocal and piano parts. It includes four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'say re - joyce.' followed by 'Let your'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support.

Let your mod - er - a - tion be
mod - er - a - tion be known un - to all men your mod - er - a - - tion

Let your mod - - er - a - tion be known un - to
known un to all men your mod - - er - a - tion be known un - to
be known to all men your mod - - er - a - tion be known un - to

Let your mod - er - a - tion be known un - to all men. The *p*

all men your mod - er - a - tion be known un - to all men. The *p*

all men your mod - er - a - tion be known un - to all men. The *p*

all men your mod - er - a - tion be known un - to all men. The *p*

Lord is at hand the Lord is at

Lord is at hand the Lord is at

Lord is at hand the Lord is at

Lord is at hand the Lord is at

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hand. . . . Be care-ful for nothing: but in ev'-ry thing, by
hand. . . . Be care-ful for nothing: but in ev'-ry thing, by
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mf *dim.* *mf* *dim.* *mf* *dim.* *mf* *dim.*

at
at
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at
at

pray'r and sup - pli - ca - tion with thanks - giv - ing, . . .
pray'r and sup - pli - ca - tion with thanks - giv - ing, . . .
pray'r and sup - pli - ca - tion with thanks - giv - ing, . . .
pray'r and sup - pli - ca - tion with thanks - giv - ing, . . .
pray'r and sup - pli - ca - tion with thanks - giv - ing, . . .

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

rall. *meno mosso.*

Let your re-quests be made known un-to God. And the peace the

rall.

Let your re-quests be made known un-to God.

rall.

Let your re-quests be made known un-to God.

rall.

Let your re-quests be made known un-to God.

rall. *meno mosso.*

peace of God, Which pass-eth all un-der-stand-ing,

Shall keep your hearts and minds through Je--sus Christ

p

our Lord And the peace the peace of God

p

And the peace the peace of God

p

And the peace the peace of . . .

p

And the peace the peace of God



cres. *mf*

Which pass - eth all under - stand - ing Shall keep your

cres. *mf*


Which pass - eth all under - stand - ing Shall keep your

cres. *mf*

God Which pass - eth all under - stand - ing Shall keep your

cres. *mf*

Which pass - eth all under - stand - ing Shall keep your



it is, and how terrible, to imagine a panic on an occasion like this! Had Miss Zimmermann hurriedly left the platform, no doubt a stampede would have occurred. Wherefore, we offer the talented lady compliments upon her undeniable good sense and bravery.

FRÄULEIN BAUER, in her recently published posthumous memoirs, gives many very interesting accounts of music and musical people in Berlin some fifty or sixty years ago. Soon after her first appearance on the stage she made the acquaintance of the critic, Ludwig Rellstab, "the whilom artillery officer," she calls him, "who had exchanged the war-weapon for the quill, and at that period was already the author of a tragedy called *Karl der Kühne*, and had written for his friend Bernhardt Klein the libretto for his (Klein's) opera *Dido*, and many a sharp theatrical criticism." Rellstab was only eight years older than Fräulein Bauer, and a very attractive person, despite his undeniable ugliness. His nose was flat, having been broken by a fall upon the ice, his features rather Mongolian, and, moreover, for a young man he was unusually stout. Clever, lively eyes flashed through the glasses of his spectacles; his mind was uncommonly active and his conversation simply charming when he did not happen to have a satirical fit. His critical pen was more "dreaded than loved, and even his praise sometimes wound unintentionally. I asked it, as the highest favour of him, never to praise me in his critical notes but rather graciously to censure me. I believe he has never either praised or censured me." This was just what Fräulein Bauer deserved, and what all artists deserve who are guilty of the affectation of asking critics "never to praise them."

CRITICS in those days, as in these, found it very difficult to satisfy the subjects of their criticism; and both Rellstab and Saphir seem to have followed the wise plan of not attempting to do so. It was at their peril, however, that critics found fault with singers and actresses who enjoyed the favour of the Prussian monarch. For Henriette Sontag, who felt deeply mortified at Rellstab's pamphlet, *Henriette, the Beautiful Singer*, and at Saphir's satirical attacks in the *Schenellpost*, the King struck in personally and energetically. Rellstab was sent to Spandau, there to be confined in the fortress; and a sharp Royal mandate was issued against Saphir to this effect:—"Art criticism permitted; personalities forbidden."

A LONG account is given by Fräulein Bauer of Paganini's first appearance in the Prussian capital, from which the following may be extracted:—"People called him a demon, a magician, a wizard, in league with Satan; one who had for ever given himself up to his Satanic majesty thro' a murder, and who, in return, had received the 'wonder violin' (*wunder-geige*) from which the magic bow drew forth sounds such as no honest hand of man had ever produced. Others even asserted that the victim of the murder had been his own wife, and that her sighs and laments continued to sound forth for ever from his violin into his ears, for his punishment on earth. That was his atonement. Others, knew from Vienna journals and letters for certain a murder he did commit, that is as sure as anything; but not on his wife, for he was never married, but on a rival whom his mistress had favoured; and for this crime he has had to languish for six years in a dark subterranean dungeon at Genoa, without seeing or hearing a human being during this whole

period. On pressing entreaty his violin was left to him, and to it he confided his sorrow. But one string snapped after the other without his being able to repair or replace them, and at last only the G string was left to him. And so he learned to play upon this one string, and produced the most remarkable sounds. It was said that he could on this string mew like a cat, scream like a quarrelling old hag of a wife; but also sing like a bird, sing like a silver bell, and weep like a human heart, so that even the most callous listener would shed tears of the most heartfelt compassion."

BOUCHER, who styled himself the "Socrates of Violinists," absorbed the interest of Berlin almost as much as Paganini did a few years later. "Boucher's attractiveness did not, however, consist solely in his violin; it resided, perhaps, even more in his striking likeness to Napoleon I., which the virtuoso was not slow to capitalise abundantly. When his fiddle paused during the concert, Boucher immediately posed in one of the postures in which Napoleon was best known through the medium of cheap engravings, such as "Napoleon after the battle of Marengo," "Austerlitz," "Waterloo." "Napoleon upon the smouldering ruins of Moscow," "Napoleon in St. Helena," &c., &c. "It appears, however, that the people of Berlin cheered his stage trick ever anew." Forty years after Boucher's appearance at Berlin, Fräulein Bauer read in a Paris paper:—"An old man, penniless, implores some generous person to buy his violin. Signed Bouchier, formerly violinist to the King of Spain." A few years later the unhappy violinist, who had been once rolling in wealth, died in abject poverty.

By the time this number of THE LUTE shall reach our readers' hands, an interesting jubilee will have been celebrated in Berlin, by the five hundredth performance in the Court Theatre of Carl Maria von Weber's *Freischütz*. This delightful romantic opera, of which the German public never wearies—whereas it is but seldom played now-a-days in London and Paris—was produced for the first time in the Prussian capital on June 18, 1821, at the then just-completed Schauspielhaus, one of the monumental pseudo-classical buildings with which Frederick William III.'s favourite architect, Schinkel, adorned the modern Athens. *Der Freischütz* was received with such enthusiastic delight by the critical Berlin public that it was repeated no fewer than seventeen times during the remaining six months of the year 1821, and thirty-three times in the course of the ensuing twelvemonth. The product of its 99th performance (25th November, 1826—*Hohe Preise*), namely, £300, was paid over to the composer's heirs. Its 200th performance took place in 1840; the 300th in 1858; the 400th about twelve years later. Despite the extraordinary public favour with which it was received when the Royal Intendantur brought it out, some of the leading Berlin critics fell foul of it with more than their usual ferocity. Zelter, for instance, at that time a potent musical authority in Prussia and Director-in-Chief of the Academy of Singing, tore it to pieces so savagely that Weber addressed several Berlin journals of the period in complaint and deprecation of the abuse lavished upon his work by the learned but intensely prejudiced professor. Zelter has long since been forgotten by the great musical world; probably not half-a-dozen contemporary composers or critics have ever heard his name mentioned. But Weber's masterpiece is as fresh and flourishing in his native land as it was sixty years ago; and will live in the

affections of all true musicians as long as the world itself shall last.

It is so seldom that a high honorific distinction is bestowed upon mere executant musicians in Russia, that the recent conferment of the Stanislas Order upon Alfred Gruenfeld by Czar Alexander III. has made a considerable sensation in German musical circles, as well as at the Court of St. Petersburg itself. The Czars, like the Sultans, have distinguished themselves during the present century by their munificence to pianists "on tour;" but Imperial recognition, in such cases, has for the most part assumed the form of gifts of money or jewels, not of crosses and ribands. Alfred Gruenfeld, however, appears to have carried all before him at Gatchina and the Winter Palace; and his artistic successes in the Russian capital are recounted with genuine complacency by several of our German and Austro-Hungarian contemporaries. *Apropos* of them, the *Pester Lloyd* indicates Princess Woronzoff's palace, on the Moika Canal, as the chief temple in which aristocratic music-worship is celebrated in St. Petersburg. It appears that Gruenfeld, during his sojourn on the banks of Neva, officiated as high-priest of the temple in question, and performed musical rites almost daily within its walls. Amongst the "congregation" were to be found the Czar's brothers and sisters-in-law, and many of the great Russian Boyars. There are some excellent musical amateurs, vocal as well as instrumental, amongst the ladies of the Imperial Court. The Duchess of Leuchtenberg, a sister of the late General Skobelev, is an admirable soprano singer; so is Princess Bielska; whilst Madame de Scheremetieff holds a post of honour in the foremost rank of Latter-Day "orchestral pianists." Through the influence of the veteran composer, Adolf Henselt, who is Inspector-General of the colleges for young ladies of noble birth throughout Russia Proper, Gruenfeld was engaged to give concerts in two or three of those educational institutions, the inmates of which lead a strictly conventual life as a rule, and played his very best to highly sympathetic audiences of from seven to eight hundred damsels, all dressed alike in snow-white uniforms. Several excellent pianists, amongst them Woelffl, Luetschg and Van Ark, are attached to the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, their present chief being Madame Sophie Menter, who not long ago succeeded the lamented Louis Brassin as principal Professor of pianism at the Imperial High School, and, like her predecessor, has as much teaching as she can do at two guineas per half-hour lesson. More than one eminent teacher of music in the Russian capital, besides Henselt, derives a large income from some office or employment altogether foreign to the musical profession. Charles Davidoff, for instance, first of living violoncellists, is not only Director of the Imperial Academy of Music, but financial manager of Prince Danischew's enormous iron-works, with a salary equal to the pay and allowances of two full generals of the Russian army. It appears that Davidoff was an assiduous student of mathematics and physics as a youth, a circumstance which accidentally reached the wealthy iron-master's ears (Danischew, it should be mentioned, is *fanatico per la musica*), and suggested to him the "happy thought" of conferring upon the eminent soloist an appointment that should make him comfortable for life, independently of concerts and teaching. It was a kindly expedient, and worthy of imitation in countries which pride themselves upon being a long way ahead of Russia in civilization and "art-culture."

HUMAN endurance has its limits, and pianism—in Germany, at least—appears to have overstepped them. The Germans are a patient and long-suffering, as well as a music-loving people; but, as a rule, they live in flats, wherefore pianoforte practising, than which no more excruciating torture was ever invented by Roman Emperors or Jesuit Inquisitors, is peculiarly hard upon them, and has driven them to seek relief from its inflictions at the hands of science, the law having proved impotent to protect them from inveterate and pitiless pianists. When from eight to twelve families inhabit every dwelling-house at least two or three pianos at a time are sure to be on the jingle from rosy morn to dewy eve; German girls will practise, cheerfully indifferent to the madness superinduced by their five-finger exercises in the Sanitary Councillor above their heads, the Regius Professor beneath their feet, or the irritable superannuated Major-general on their own floor, just across the common staircase. An aggravated case of torment *hujus generis*, tried a few weeks ago in a German District Court, revealed the appalling circumstance that an assiduous P.F. student in her teens had, in the course of one dread afternoon, played Chopin's Impromptu in E sharp minor *thirty-seven* times in succession, with regularly recurrent errors and corrections. It is, doubtless, such blood-chilling deeds as this, hundreds of which are perpetrated daily in the Fatherland, that have stimulated the ingenuity of Captain Max Plessner, late of the Wuerttemberg Engineer Corps, to invent a pleasing little apparatus, by him styled "The Antiphone," warranted to produce temporary deafness in the most sensitive ear without prejudice to that organ. What the eyelid is to the eye—a facultative shield or portcullis—the Antiphone is to the ear, effectually guarding it against outrage, or even offence. It is made of white metal—silver or nickel—and in shape resembles a cork; it hermetically plugs the oral orifice, without intruding upon the tympanic membrane, and excludes every sound from the brain, substituting a delightful stillness for the hurly-burly of noise with which the chronic pianist distracts his or her agonised victim. Captain Plessner has judiciously patented his admirable invention in all the several realms of the Fatherland, thus protecting himself against the imitations of his instrument which, but for this timely precaution, would assuredly crop up in every direction throughout that piano-afflicted country. He expects to realise a colossal fortune by the Antiphone, which may be worn (with a swivel) as an ornament on the watch-chain, or as a pendant to a necklace, so as to be handy at a moment's notice to guard its owner against any unexpected P.F. onslaught. Provided with a couple of Antiphones, the most sensitive and nervous of music-lovers will be proof against the direst series of chromatic scales ever wrested from the key-board by the halting fingers of a dull school-girl, and may brave with unruffled calm the utmost terrors of the piano-organ's tinkle. For this "surcease of sorrow" grateful mankind should do something uncommonly handsome in the way of a testimonial to its Wuerttembergian benefactor. He has deserved well of his suffering fellow-creatures.

FLORID singing has of late years gone out of fashion in Germany, where the "first ladies" of the day excel in musical declamation rather than in supple tricks of vocalization. Richard Pohl, a well-known theatrical agent, has lately recorded the difficulties he encountered in carrying out a commission entrusted to him, viz., to provide a first-

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class "Coloratur-Saengerin" for the fashionable concert-season at Baden-Baden, when the German Emperor and Empress and a great international gathering of princes, nobles and diplomatists had to be catered for in the way of musical recreation. "These illustrious and wealthy personages," he observes, "are not easy to amuse. They have heard and seen everything and everybody; nothing but the very best is good enough for them. Besides, purely ornamental singing no longer pays, in Germany, as a career. Opera-managements cannot afford to engage vocalists of the pyrotechnic category, for they do not draw enough public money to pay their expenses. Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti no longer constitute the stock operatic repertoire as of yore. And, this being the case, I was called upon to secure some florid prima-donna up to the ordeal of singing before the German Emperor and the *crème-de-la-crème* of Paris, London, Petersburg and Vienna society! Even had I been empowered to pay £400 an evening, which I was not, I could not have got hold of the inimitable Patti. Nilsson was in Baden, but out of health, and would not sing. I could not get at Marcella Sembrich, even with the aid of electricity. Albani would not budge from London. Etelka Gerster had already proved a failure in Baden, where even Lucca had not quite come up to the mark of my public's requirements in the way of *floriture*. Whom did I hit upon at last. The answer is characteristic of the state of affairs obtaining in Germany, as far as *Coloratur* singers are concerned; a Swede (Alina Fohstrom) and a Belgian (Dyna Beumer). There are, of course, half-a-dozen florid *prime donne* in Germany, all more or less open to one or two objections—too little voice, or too much weight, as well of flesh as of years. Their circumference is against them: a mountain with the voice of a mouse is an absurdity. Our best *Coloratur-Saengerin* is Lilli Lehmann in Berlin; but, not contented with having realised the ideal "first Rhine-daughter," she aspires to become a typical Sieglinde and Senta; and there is an end, of course, to all her execution. Our Lilli is too good an artist not to be bored by such futile stuff as "Una voce poco fa." She seeks a wider field for her remarkable talent. But I scarcely think that high tragedy is altogether her line; for what she lacks is not flexibility, but warmth of temperament. You will ask why, if I consider her the best of the batch, did I not engage her for Baden-Baden? Well, I could hardly offer to their Majesties, as a novelty or watering-place "star," their own paid servant, whom they can hear five times a week all through the winter season at the Berlin Hofoper. That would never do; so I fell back on my Swede and my Belgian, *faute de mieux*, and the Concerts went off as well as could be expected."

ABOUT three weeks ago Léo Délibes was elected a member of the French Academy of Fine Arts in succession to the illustrious Victor Massé. He has been a member of the Legion of Honour for some years, that distinction having been conferred upon him the day after the production of his admirable ballet *Sylvia*. Délibes, who has completed his forty-eighth year, was born at La Flèche, where, as a mere child, he exhibited such an extraordinary aptitude for the musical art, that his uncle, an organist, was enabled to obtain for him admission to the Conservatoire when he was barely eleven years old. He entered Massé's pianoforte class, and subsequently passed into that of Adolphe Adam. It was towards the close of his studies at the Conservatoire (1855) that one day by accident he handed Adam

a MS. operetta of his own composition instead of a set of studies which his master had instructed him to prepare. Adam looked carefully through the score, and presently exclaimed, "This is not bad, by any means. Did you write it?" Six weeks later, through the *maestro's* influence, it was performed at the Folies Nouvelles; and during the following year Délibes was engaged as P.F. accompanist at the Théâtre Lyrique. Thenceforth he gave his fertility as a composer full play, and the following operettas from his pen were brought out in rapid succession at the Bouffes-Parisiens:—*Les deux vieilles Gardes*, *Les six Demoiselles à marier*, *Le Bœuf Apis*, *L'Omelette à la Follembuche*, *Le Serpent à Plumes*, *M. de Bonne-Etoile*, *Les Musiciens de l'Orchestre* and *Les Eaux d'Ems*. Two subsequent compositions of this class, *Maitre Griffard* and *Le Jardinier et son Seigneur*, were given with extraordinary success at one of the Boulevard theatres. In 1867 the doors of the Grand Opéra were thrown open to him by Emile Perrin; his first works written specially for that establishment were a *divertissement* interpolated into Adam's ballet, *Le Corsaire*, and the second act of *La Source*, followed at no great interval of time by the inimitable ballets which conferred upon him world-wide fame—*Coppelia* and *Sylvia*. The opera *Le Roi Pa dit*, was composed by him for the Opéra Comique, whence (translated into German) it was soon transferred to the Court Operahouses of Berlin and Vienna, and achieved extraordinary popularity in both those musical capitals. His next opera, *Jean de Nivelle*, had a run of a hundred nights at the Opéra Comique, for which establishment *Lakmé* was also written; a work which fairly took the Parisian public by storm. Amongst his extra-theatrical works of major importance are a "symphonic ode," entitled *La Mort d'Orphée*, which was produced at the Trocadéro under his leadership, and an extremely beautiful cantata, executed at the Grand Opéra on the occasion of the Auber Centenary Celebrations. Much music of inestimable value may still be hoped for from this genial and fruitful composer, who, at a comparatively early age, has won all the honours and distinctions his country—ever grateful to native genius—has at its disposal for conferment upon eminent musicians.

FROM THE PROVINCES.

BIRMINGHAM.—To stand sponsor to an untried man, and to "exploit" his musical workmanship is such a risky matter that there is little blame if choral organizations, as a rule, fight shy of what is suspiciously like a concert "game of chance." Luckily, however, for itself, and, still more luckily for those who, but for it, might remain "mute and inglorious," the Birmingham Amateur Harmonic Association, from the fact that its subscription is assured before a line of its prospectus is issued, can, and does very often, take "the practice hand" up. Exercising this its beneficent appanage, on December 4th, the organization supplied an opportunity to the Rev. Mr. Hodson for the production of his Cantata *The Golden Legend*. Hailing from the cathedral city of Lichfield, barely a score miles from the midland metropolis, Mr. Hodson came to us with no other imprimatur than that supplied by his own MS.; consequently in his success, comparative or otherwise, he is veritably the "architect of his own fortune." Requisitioning Longfellow's well-known poem, with the competent aid of the Rev. Baden Powell as collaborateur, the composer arranges his book with a prologue, three divisions and an epilogue. The story of

woman's love and devotion, beautifully told in Longfellow's strophes, is so familiar, that the briefest reference to the plot is all that is necessary. Henry, Prince of Hohenech is suffering from a wasting disease, and his recovery is only to be obtained (according to the doctors attending him), by the self-sacrifice of a maiden of her own free will. Elsie, the child of Gottlieb, a farmer, hearing the strange specific suggested by the faculty of Salerno, devotes herself unflinchingly to its accomplishment. The Prince accompanies her to the spot where the self-immolation is to take place, and, on the way thither, is cured of his malady. Finally, as his wife, he presents her to his court. The prologue introduces the supernatural element, Lucifer and his myrmidons trying to remove the cross from the cathedral tower of Strasburg. Part I. tells of Henry's temptation and resolves; Part II. Elsie, design carried out and the pilgrimage; Part III., the restoration of the child to her parents as the bride of the Prince for whom she was willing to sacrifice herself. The epilogue is confined to a final chorus mostly reflective in character. The work comprises five-and-twenty numbers, the greater part of which are employed either as solos, or concerted pieces, the chorus being sparingly used. Mr. Hodson distinctly aims at dramatic characterisation, and on the whole he has fairly succeeded. The prologue is his best effort in this line, the legend proper, his least successful. The melodies strike one as being original, and are studiously kept within reasonable limits. While none are show pieces for vocalists, yet each contains plenty of true "grit." The concerted pieces have not the fault of "hammered-out melody," but are well planned, thoughtfully formulated, and handled with discretion. The choruses are without pretence, do not aim at elaborate fugue or abstruse counterpoint, and are as a rule, pithy and clear. The orchestration, beyond perhaps too great a fondness for wood, wind and reed, is well distributed. Finally, on the general view of his cantata, I can certainly say Mr. Hodson does not in a single bar, from title to imprint, attempt at the absurd polophony so characteristic of many members of the young English school, who attempt at the eccentricities of Wagner, without possessing a tithe of his genius. While one cannot claim for Mr. Hodson a foremost place for this *Golden Legend*, he can be assigned comfortable quarters far above those earned by respectable mediocrity. The cantata is the thoughtful work of a thoughtful musician, and if it is a fair sample of the "stuff" its author is composed of, by all means let him try again. The faults are obviously those of inexperience, and the shortcomings such as time and practice alone can cure. Mr. Hodson had good cause to be more than satisfied with the treatment of his piece, for rank and file did its "level best" with *The Golden Legend*. Madame Worrell, who sustained the dual rôle of Elsie and the Angel of Good Deeds, sang with artistic perception, and Miss Ellen Marchant was a capital Ursula. Mr. Kenningham sang the music of Prince Henry with refinement, and Mr. D. Harrison undertook, with credit to himself, to double the part of Lucifer with that of Gottlieb. An excellent orchestra, nearly fifty strong, played the accompaniments faultlessly; and the chorus, well balanced, and thoroughly well trained under the experienced care of Mr. H. C. Stockley, gave a good account of this department. Mr. W. Astley Langston, *vice* Mr. Stimpson, the usual occupant of the organ-stool, who is, I am sorry to say, extremely unwell, gave ready and valuable help. Mr. Stockley conducted, and, at the close of the proceedings, in obedience to a loud call, Mr. Hodson, who was seated in the President's gallery,

bowed his acknowledgments from that locale. There was a large attendance.—The second instalment of Mr. Stockley's current orchestral series, given on Thursday evening, December 11th, must have been more than satisfactory to the most exigent admirer of the native art his *clientèle* includes. Mr. F. H. Cowen's "Welsh" Symphony, his Orchestral Suite, "The Language of Flowers," and Mr. Mackenzie's Ballade for orchestra "La Belle Dame sans Merci," formed the special trinity of attention in the programme. So far as regards the "Welsh" Symphony, I have only to add my mite of congratulation to the chorus of approval with which Mr. Cowen's latest handiwork has been received. We were favoured with the presence of the composer, and I have every reason for saying he was thoroughly delighted with the *con amore* style in which the executants rendered his Symphony. The Orchestral Suite perhaps, was not quite so delicately played as at the Festival of 1882, its initiatory performance here, but the shortcomings were not serious enough to imperil a renewed experience of Mr. Cowen's deft scoring. Mr. Mackenzie's illustration of Keat's poem was a feature of the Concert. This Orchestral Ballade was extremely well played, and Mr. Stockley and his coadjutors deserve unstinted praise for the satisfactory result of obviously hard work in rehearsals. Madame Rose Hersee and Mr. Edward Lloyd supplied the vocal complement to the scheme; the former achieved only a *succès d'estime* in "Una Voce," her principal contribution. Mr. Lloyd sang "Lend me your aid" magnificently, and gave the beautiful aria from the *Rose of Sharon*, "Rise up, my love," with exquisite taste. A new departure from the orthodox lines furnished by "Comrades in Arms," the well-known vocal quartet, given by four trombones, was instantly condoned by the capital manner in which Adolphe Adam's piece was played by Messrs. Goddard, Bell, Englemann, and Hannan, the brass quartette. Mr. Stockley conducted, and and Mr. D. Winn supplied with tact the piano accompaniments.—Of the doings of the Musical Associations, excepting the mistake of allowing an inexperienced local society to attempt Mr. Cowen's Cantata, the *Rose Maiden*, I can say the month's work has been more than satisfactory. With an *Elit* performance on December 20th, the Association ended the first half of the present series. Mr. C. G. Beale, the Choir Steward of the Festival, is busily engaged on the compilation of his choir list. He expects to be ready for work by about the last week in January, by which time the librarian will have one or other of the new instalments for the programme for the gathering of 1885. Nothing as yet has been heard of Dvorák's Cantata, but knowing his marvellous capacity for hard work when put to it, little or no anxiety is felt for the lack of definite information from the Czech musician. Although nothing definite is yet made public as to the artistic personnel for the Festival, I have every reason to believe the following cast will be the chosen one:—Soprani, Madame Albani, Mrs. Hutchinson, and Miss Anna Williams; contralti, Madame Patey and Madame Trebelli; tenori, Mr. Joseph Maas and Mr. Edward Lloyd; bassi, Mr. Frederic King, Signor Foli, and Mr. Santley; director in chief, Herr Richter; conductors, Mr. F. H. Cowen, Mr. W. C. Stockley, Herr Dvorák, and M. Gounod. It is extremely likely that Herr Joachim and Senor Sarasate will be asked to play violin solos.

GLASGOW.—On 6th ult., Mr. Carl Rosa's Opera Company concluded a twelve nights' engagement at the Royalty Theatre. It was, on the whole, a successful one, yet it remains to be said that the local support accorded the enterprising impresario is not altogether what it ought

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to be. At this time of day there is little need to place on record even the leading features of a varied and familiar repertory. Provincial amateurs know well to count upon an excellent all-round representation of *Mignon*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, the *Bohemian Girl*, *Trovatore*, and many other works of equally enduring popularity. Those just named secured their wonted favour, and adequate support by the leading members of the troupe was forthcoming on each occasion. Howbeit, the performance of Verdi's ever-green opera on the evening of the 2nd ult. was, unfortunately, marred by the indisposition of Mr. Barton McGuckin. The favourite tenor was, obviously, suffering from cold; but, with more pluck than discretion, he resolved to do his best in the interests of all concerned. At the end of the second act, increasing hoarseness obliged him to retire, and his place was taken by Mr. B. Wilson. It is needful to thus give a correct version of the occurrence, as exaggerated accounts of Mr. McGuckin's indisposition was flashed across the wires, creating un-called-for alarm amongst his friends. With characteristic spirit, Mr. Rosa again brought with him a couple of works new to Glasgow audiences. These were the *Beggar Student*, and Boito's *Mefistofèle*. Without entering the polemical arena, it may be sufficient to note in this column that Müllöcker's tuneful opera gave unbounded satisfaction to all who heard it. The Italian composer's work created, however, active interest in musical circles. A crowded audience could hardly, for a while, make out the precise lines on which Boito had built his unique design. Frankly speaking, the listeners were somewhat perplexed by the curious combination of the new method, and the grateful dash of the genuine Italian school infused into the scene where the Helen of Troy episode has found place. Alike in the prologue, in the engaging quartet pertaining to the garden scene, in the weird revels on the Brocken, and in the beauteous treatment of the episode just named, Boito's exposition appealed, in turn, to the philosophical and the sensuous. It was tacitly felt that the hand of a master had grasped his subject, and regret was expressed that a second hearing of the opera could not possibly be arranged. The leading rôles were in the experienced hands of Madame Marie Rôze, who secured a frank success, and Messrs. McGuckin and Ludwig, both worthy exponents of the exacting music. The work was carefully staged, and the band and chorus lent wonderfully efficient support. During the company's stay here they were briefly engaged rehearsing *Manon*. It is easy to foreshadow a cordial reception for M. Massenet's fascinating opera at Liverpool on an early day. The cast is a strong one, and I am given to understand that the various artistes are uncommonly interested in their work.—The eleventh series of the Glasgow Choral Union Concerts was inaugurated on the 9th ult., when St. Andrew's Hall again presented the brilliant appearance so familiar to patrons of the scheme. Since last year many changes have taken place in the *personnel* of the orchestra. Curiosity was thus stimulated to ascertain the powers of this season's band, and that admirable test overture, *Der Freischütz*, served to very speedily show the results of a selection, which has evidently been made with care and discrimination. The first violins (14) form a powerful and compact body of executants; of no less account are the "seconds;" the 'cellos are unusually fine, while the wood wind contingent sought and obtained exceeding favour amongst connoisseurs. In all these circumstances Weber's prelude secured a performance which, it is no exaggeration to say, was simply superb. Mr. Manns, who met with an ovation, missed not

a point in a favourite score, and the same may be said on behalf of a singularly good rendition of Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 in D. Herr Robert Heckmann made, on this occasion, his first acquaintance with a Glasgow audience. His abilities as a *chef d'attaque* have been promptly acknowledged, and in the capacity of soloist the new leader won a success as generous as it was well merited. Bazzini's showy Concertstück in D. major, was a vehicle for the display of clever technique. More artistic acquirements found, however, found warm recognition in his elegant phrasing of Vieuxtemps Reverie, and in the breadth of style which characterised his performance of Handel's Sonata in F. Madame Minnie Hauk made her first appearance in the "Land o' Cakes" on the concert platform. Mendelssohn's *Elijah* finds high favour hereabouts, and to the marked disadvantage of the claims of *St. Paul*. I do not defend the distinction which the Choral Union management have drawn for many years back between the earlier oratorio and the Birmingham one. Here, however, I am only concerned with the performance of a work which an accomplished journalist, on its initial appearance, described as "the greatest achievement of Mendelssohn's genius." *Elijah* was brought forward at the second Concert of the subscription series. There was again a large audience. The choruses were, in the main, well sung, and I cheerfully record a success which has been re-echoed at all hands. Much of it ought to be placed to the credit of Mr. Allan Macbeth, the Chorus Director of the "Union." His work is, possibly, unknown to many patrons of the Concerts, but it is, none the less, an important factor in the needful preparations. Madame Valleria confirmed the highly favourable impression she made at the last Leeds Festival as an exponent of oratorio music. Mr. Ludwig's dramatic reading of the title part was followed with singular interest, and the band accompaniments were discoursed with praiseworthy effect.—The "Popular Concerts" in connection with the Choral Union scheme commenced on Saturday evening the 13th ult. St. Andrew's Hall, as usual, was filled, the programme included an admirable performance of Mendelssohn's Scotch symphony, M. Jules Lasserre in his 'cello solos sustained a well-known reputation, and Mlle. Maria de Lido, from the Imperial Opera, St. Petersburg, sang with ample vocal power, and with, moreover, a grace and elegance which gained her many new friends in the north. Mr. Manns was, of course, at his post as conductor, again receiving a warm welcome.—On the evening of the 19th ult. the "Glasgow Society of Musicians" entertained Mr. Fred. H. Cowen to dinner. Covers were laid for over 80, and under the genial chairmanship of Julius Seligmann an agreeable evening was spent. The gathering, it ought to be mentioned, was highly representative.—On 6th ult., M. Emile Berger's promising pupil, Miss Matilda Wagner, gave a pianoforte recital in the Berkley Hall, and with gratifying encouragement.

LIVERPOOL.—The beginning of December finds the musical season here in full swing, and the prevailing depression in commercial matters seems rather to have induced greater exertions than are usually the rule. The fifth Concert of the Philharmonic Season, on December 3rd, although presenting no item of striking novelty, was yet of sufficient importance to attract the keen attention of musical cognoscenti. The Symphony presented was the second (in D) of Haydn's Saloman group, and it was excellently played under the direction of Dr. Hallé. The overtures given were three in number,

first, Spohr's *Faust*; second, Berlioz *Waverley*; and third, Reinecke's *King Manfred*. Madame Trebelli, who was the vocalist, was by no means heard to the best advantage in the aria, "Che farò," from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*; but in a chanson by Hugo, to a musical setting of Bizet's, under the title of "Adieu de l'hôtesse Arabe," she attained a far higher standard. The chorus gave two part-songs—Gaul's "The silent land" and Sullivan's "Echoes"—in a style reflecting brightly the care bestowed by their admirable trainer, Mr. H. A. Branscombe. At the sixth Concert of the series, on the 23rd December, *Jephtha* was the work presented, with Miss Mary Davies, Miss Eleanor Rees, Mr. Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Frederick King as vocal principals, and Mr. Best at the organ.—At Dr. Hallé's fourth Concert, on December 9th, Schumann's Symphony in C major was given with really admirable effect and judgment. The "Charfreitag Zauber," from *Parsifal*, was the Wagnerian excerpt, and the overtures to *Le Pré aux Clercs* and *Egmont* were also presented. Mdlle. Alice Barbi was the vocalist, and on this, her first appearance here, created an excellent impression, while Madame Norman-Néruda played Spohr's Concerto in E minor, No. 7, with her wonted effect.—The Society Armonica gave their seventh public rehearsal on Saturday, December 6th; but in the andante movement in Gade's Fourth Symphony, and in Haydn's Symphony, No. 25, in C, they had evidently selected work far beyond their powers; and it is to be hoped that by the exercise of greater modesty in future, they will ensure for their musical hearers a far more agreeable evening's entertainment.—As an evidence of the appreciation which music, as a science, is now attaining, it may be stated that over 250 names have been given in for the approaching examinations of the Royal Academy of Music, and, in addition, the entries for the Trinity College examination (which has just taken place here, under the direction of Mr. H. J. Stark, Mus. Bac.), also show a large increase upon last year's record.—The Free Concerts for the people, under the direction of Father Nugent, to which allusion was made last month, are running their course with every success. No difficulty whatever is found in providing artists—indeed, the practical and philanthropic manager has considerable difficulty in meeting the desires of all these friends, both professional and amateur, who are anxious to exert themselves for the amusement and relaxation of their artisan and labouring brothers. The Rotunda Lecture Hall is all too small for the vast number of those anxious to be present, and it is quite time the City Council offered the use of St. George's Hall, which would accommodate possibly 4,000. This would be profitable from a selfish point of view, as it is evident that the intellectual attraction of these entertainments saves the Stipendiary much work on Monday mornings. The *Messiah* is announced for Christmas Day, by the Cambrian Choral Society, with Mr. William Parry (who so successfully piloted his brother's *Nebuchadnezzar* at the Eisteddfod), as conductor, on the 27th December, the Young Men's Choral Union is to present it, and, on the 31st, the Philharmonic Choral Society give it with Mr. Randegger as conductor. These performances are too late for notice this month.—Taking into consideration the large and increasing amount of attention which the music of Wagner is receiving, it may be looked upon as a wise step by Mr. Hermann Franke in arranging a Concert to be given at the Philharmonic Hall on April 21st next, with Herr Hans Richter as conductor. A strong committee has taken up the matter, and there is every prospect of a full subscription list being

secured. The selections from Wagner consist of the overture to *Tannhäuser*, Vorspiel to *Parsifal*, introduction and closing scene from *Tristan and Isolde*, and Walküre-entr'acte from *Die Walküre*. In addition, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 4, in D minor and G major, and Beethoven's Symphony, No. 7, in A, will also be performed.—The Carl Rosa season, lasting five weeks, opens at the Royal Court Theatre, as last year, on Christmas night with a sacred Concert, at which will be presented Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer," and excerpts from *The Messiah*, *Creation*, *Elijah*, and *Samson*, with various sacred songs. The company will comprise amongst principals, the following:—Mesdames Marie Rôze and Georgina Burns; Misses Clara Perry, Marion Burton, Kate Bensberg, and Alice Sugden; and Messrs. Barton McGuckin, Maurice de Solla, Davies, Ludwig, Snazelle, and Leslie Crotty. Mr. Goossens will conduct, and Mr. John Reed will lead the orchestra. In addition to the well-known and extensive repertoire of the company, *Mefistofele*, *The Beggar Student*, and *The Canterbury Pilgrims* will be given for the first time in Liverpool; and early in January, Massenet's grand opera *Manon* will be produced for the first time in England, with Madame Marie Rôze as Manon, and Mr. Barton McGuckin as Le Chevalier des Grieux. Mr. Carl Rosa's general manager in Liverpool, Mr. J. D. McLaren, has displayed an amount of appreciation for the comfort of his clients which amount almost to genius. In addition to the series of subscription tickets available for a set of fifteen performances at the rate of about 5s. 6d. per night for stalls, and 4s. 6d. each for dress circle seats, he has met the wants of his humbler, but possibly more appreciative patrons, by the issue of books of 20 tickets, at the extremely moderate rate of £3 per book for pit stalls, £2 for pit, and £1 for gallery. There is no restriction as to the number of tickets used for any performance, and they are moreover available by the early door, so that, at a very moderate price, frequenters of pit and gallery can secure an excellent seat, and the performance may be enjoyed minus the purgatory of waiting for half-an-hour exposed to the wind and rain of a January evening.

MANCHESTER.—If we are musically quiet in the summer, we more than make up for it in the winter. In addition to the many concerts which are being given in every direction, we have the "Royal English Opera Company," performing at St. James's Theatre, and shall have another operatic company, bearing the same name, beginning a series of operas on December 23rd, in the New Comedy Theatre. That two companies should have the same title, and play almost at the same time, in the same place, shows very clearly that there is confusion somewhere.—Mr. Hallé's Concerts have so far been very interesting, but the only work requiring any notice is the *Stabat Mater* of Dvorák, which was given on November 27th, with Miss Anna Williams, Madame Patey, Mr. Edward Lloyd and Mr. King in the principal parts. It was splendidly performed by principals, band and chorus, but it failed to evoke any considerable amount of enthusiasm.—M. de Jong's Concerts have been well attended. On Saturday, the 6th ult., as it was announced that Mr. Sims Reeves would positively appear, the Free Trade Hall was crowded in every part. The great tenor did put in an appearance, and sang with all his old taste, to the immense delight of the audience. Madame Minnie Hauk also charmed the audience with her very refined singing.—At the Gentlemen's Concerts, Mdlle. Clotilde Kleeberg made a very favourable impression as a pianist. To select Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto was a daring thing,

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but she went through the ordeal most satisfactorily.—Mr. Charles Hallé's Afternoon Pianoforte Recitals continue to attract large numbers.—On December 1st, the Glasgow Select Choir, numbering twenty-four voices, paid us a visit. Their singing is exquisite. Every little detail is attended to, and the pianos and fortes are as nearly perfect as they can well be. The balance also is good, and reflects much credit on their trainer.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A FUGITIVE ORGAN-CONCERTO.

To the Editor of THE LUTE.

SIR,—Among the many composition of Handel which Mr. Best has introduced to us at his organ recitals is an organ-concerto in G major, which ought pre-eminently to be styled "The Grand Concerto." It consists of Largo, Ciaccona, Andante and Fuga, near the end of which occurs an interrupted cadence.

This noble work, strange to say, does not appear to be published, although there is not one uninteresting bar in it, and, to quote the words of Mr. Best, it "is distinguished by the sustained *pianissimo* of the beautiful opening movement, which, with its fine sequences of harmony, claims attention from the first note."

Organists are already greatly indebted to Mr. Best for his masterly arrangements of many of Handel's concertos, but he is evidently not inclined to publish his MS. arrangement of the one to which I allude, although, whenever played, it has been received with prolonged applause and has excited much inquiry.

It is not in either of the two sets of six concertos already published, nor, so far as I am aware, is it in the German Handel Society's collection.

Can any of your readers inform me where the original score or a copy of it may be found, even though it be but a skeleton treble and bass?

In common with many lovers of Handel's music I venture to say, that so long as this masterpiece remains unpublished, the crown of Handel lacks one glorious gem.

Yours faithfully,

CADENZA D'INGANNO.

[Will Mr. Best himself enlighten our correspondent through these columns?—Ed.]

REVIEWS.

WOOD AND CO.

Gavotte. For the Pianoforte. By Carl Volti.

THE composer has good intentions, but can, by no means, be congratulated on the originality of his theme.

Sleep my lov'd one! Serenade. Words by Edward Oxenford. Music by Alfred Redhead.

AN unpretending but graceful and pleasing song. Mr. Redhead has the gift of melody.

Romanza and Scherzo. From Sonata in F. Minor. By J. Theodore Treckell.

MR. TREKELL'S ideas are always pleasing, and he contrives to reveal them with all needful clearness. The Romanza and Scherzo—which makes us wish to see the Sonata in its entirety—present no serious difficulties even to the average pianist, and will well repay study.

A Lover's Reasons. Song. Words by M. A. Baines. Music by W. C. Levey.

IS simple in construction, and displays much musical feeling.

W. SAVILLE AND CO.

Mémoire. Caprice pour le Piano. Par H. J. King.

NEITHER better nor worse than the average of its numerous kind but, as it affords good exercise in variety of touch, might be made instructive.

PATEY AND WILLIS.

Songs of the Flowers. Twelve two-part Songs. Words by Edward Oxenford. Music by Ciro Pinsuti.

THE multiplication of Mr. Pinsuti's songs is a sign that they are worthily appreciated by the general public. This collection of two-part songs cannot fail to be warmly received by all who admire purity of style and unaffected expression. The music throughout is as fresh and dainty as Mr. Oxenford's verses are charming. The "Songs of the Flowers" are also published in Tonic Sol-fa notation.

METZLER AND CO.

Three Drawing-room Pieces. For the Pianoforte. By J. Hoffmann. No. 3. *The Amazon.*

THIS is a characteristic and effective little piece in six-eight time. It will find favour with teachers for reasons appreciable at a glance.

Ball Scenes. For the Pianoforte. By J. Hoffmann. No. 5. *Galop.*

THIS is a capital piece, full of life and "go," and may be recommended as one of the best examples of its kind.

Lessons Sweet of Spring's Returning. Song. Words by Keble. Music by Maria E. H. Stisted.

THIS song is ambitious in purpose and superior in achievement, and is none the worse for suggesting Haydn. A singer of taste could not fail to make it effective.

In the Ranks. Quadrille. By H. Spreake.

MR. SPREAKE has succeeded in writing a spirited dance-piece on the principal airs used in Messrs. Sims and Pettit's well-known drama.

Day Break. Serenade. Words from the French of Victor Hugo. Music by Joseph Barnby.

THIS publication will do much to sustain its author's reputation as a musician of taste and skill. The melody happily reflects the feeling of the poet, and the accompaniment, while conducive to effect, is not over elaborated to the point where interest is transferred from the voice to the pianoforte. Tenor vocalists of ability will do well to add this beautiful song to their repertory.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Little Bo-Peep. Humorous Part Song for four voices. By Harry Davey.

THE composer has dealt happily with the time-honoured nursery rhyme, for the music is good, and will be appreciated as much for its artistic effect as for its sense of humour.

Granny. Ballad. Words and Music by Gilbert Webb. A PRETTY, simple ballad, well suited for drawing-room use.

POET'S CORNER.

SAXON HAROLD.

WITHOUT, the valley is bleak and bare,
 And the hill is white with snow;
 Within, I sit in my cosy chair,
 In the firelight's pleasant glow:
 The door is opened by chubby hands,
 I am called a tender name,
 And a little lad before me stands,
 The twilight tale to claim.

We learn together many a truth
 From history's varied page;
 From the words and deeds of noble youth,
 And the riper ones of age.
 To-night I tell, with a joyous pride,
 The story he loves so well—
 Of the fight upon a broad hillside,
 Where the brave young Harold fell.

My boy is a Saxon Harold too,
 With a spirit bright and bold;
 His eyes are the bonny Saxon blue,
 And his head is thatched with gold:
 In manhood's strife may he ever share
 The courage and faith sublime,
 The heart to will and the hand to dare,
 Of the King of olden time!

HAROLD WYNN.

MADAME PATTI has, in the course of her career, sung the leading rôles in no fewer than thirty grand operas.

H.R.H. the PRINCE of WALES has been graciously pleased to accept a copy of Mr. Alfred Allen's new song "London."

FRANZ LISZT intends to come forth from his retirement, and to give some Concerts at Rome. He will spend the winter in Tivoli.

THE unsuccessful rivals of M. Délibes for the vacancy in the Académie des Beaux-Arts were MM. Felix Clement, Ernest Guiraud and Victorien Joncières.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are urgently needed for the assistance of the widow and twelve children of the late Charles T. Rowe. Donations will be received by Mr. Arthur Chappell and Mr. Stanley Lucas.

MADAME SOPHIE MENTER will soon be a wealthy artist. Not only is she giving lessons in St. Petersburg at the rate of four guineas an hour, but a legacy of large size has been bequeathed to her by a rich admirer.

A FOREIGN correspondent says: "Lucca has the hay fever." You bet she has. All the singing foreigners have it. They have a fever for making hay while the sun shines, and America is the sunniest patch of land out of doors. Lucca will recover when she takes her usual treatment next winter.

CHICAGO music critic to editor Chicago daily paper: "Is it too late to make a correction in my notice?" Editor: "Is it important?" "I said that Svendsen was a Swedeborgian. I was mistaken; he is a Norwegian."

VOCALIST (singing): "I'm on the sea." Man (in audience): "You would be if you weren't so flat."

A MUSIC teacher once wrote that "the art of playing the violin required the nicest perception and the most sense of any art in the known world." But a Western editor quotes, and comments: "The art of publishing a newspaper and making it pay, and at the same time make it please everybody, beats fiddlin' higher than a kite."

THE proprietors of the *Musical World* have contradicted the report that they intended to cease the publication of their paper next year, when the "Jubilee" was reached. We are very glad to hear it. The *Musical World*, apart from its intrinsic value as a journal, has associations connected with it which every one would be unwilling to see broken off.

TARDILY enough, a pension of eighty pounds a-year out of the scanty Civil List, has been granted to the widow of Michael W. Balfe. It will be remembered that an impression got abroad at one time that Balfe was endeavouring to pass himself off as a foreigner, because his compositions were signed "M. W. Balfe." The first letter was supposed by some to stand for "Monsieur."

Aben Hamet, the new opera by Theodore Dubois, written by MM. Detroyat and de Lauzières, was produced with great success in Paris on the 15th ultimo. Some of the numbers are singularly striking. One duet had to be sung three times, and several solos were encored. M. Victor Maurel and Madame Janvier took part, as well as two *débütantes* Mdle. Calvé, and a young lady bearing the honoured name of Lablache.

CHURCH service is conducted in America, like everything else, in an original manner. After a pathetic sermon by Henry Ward Beecher in Plymouth Church the other day, M. Ovide Musin, the violinist, played in the organ-loft a *mélodie melancholique* by Prume. The sermon is reported to have drawn tears to many eyes and the violin solo is said to have been in thorough accord with the discourse—but this is a poor compliment to M. Musin.

AN interesting executant musical feat was performed on the 19th ult. at the Prince's Hall by the Chevalier L. G. Bach, pianist to the Court of Prussia, who played three Beethoven *Concerti* in succession, accompanied by a full orchestra under the direction of Signor Alberto Randegger. Herr Bach fulfilled his formidable undertaking with great spirit, intelligence and conscientiousness. His reading of the great Master's works was, on the whole, a satisfactory one, and, as might have been expected from his previous public performances in this metropolis, his execution was for the most part unexceptionable. This vigorous and indefatigable artist—a favourite pupil of the greatest pianoforte player in the world, Franz Liszt—deserves great credit for the courage he has displayed in bidding for the favour of the London musical public (at a season of the year not particularly favourable to concert-givers) by a Beethoven Recital *pur et simple*, offering no adventitious attractions of an *ad captandum* nature, but relying wholly for the success with which it was justly crowned, upon the intrinsic beauty of the compositions inscribed upon its programme, and upon the excellent quality of their performance by the gifted soloist and his able orchestral supporters.

